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Editorial

WITH THE WELCOME RETURN of Dr. Leon Morris to Tyndale House as Warden it is hoped that recent double numbers of this *Bulletin* may give place to regular bi-annual issues. An appreciation will be found on a later page of our new Warden's earlier contributions to the work of the House and to evangelical scholarship generally. We shall look forward with keen anticipation to further work from his industrious pen.

This issue of the *Bulletin* presents four articles, providing the substance of papers read at meetings of the Old Testament, New Testament and Biblical Theology Study Groups of the Tyndale Fellowship. Each in its own context invites interest for aspects of Biblical Theology which merit attention. The Book of Proverbs is far too commonly regarded simply as a collection of oriental maxims. Derek Kidner demonstrates its theistic background and theological presuppositions. The various adjectives applied to Covenant in the Old Testament are examined by D. F. Payne, with particular reference to the use of the word 'everlasting'. The Book of Hebrews, always a challenge and full of interest, has attracted Alan M. Fairhurst's attention to evidence of Hellenistic influences and Stephen Smalley's to its particular presentation of the doctrine of the atonement.

The Relationship between God and Man in Proverbs[1]

by F. Derek Kidner

WHEN WE OPEN the Book of Proverbs at random and take samples of its wisdom, we may form the impression that its religious content is somewhat thin and indefinite. Many of its maxims, and some even of its theological assertions, could be transplanted acceptably into non-Israelite, non-biblical soil. We are tempted to ask whether anything so specific as a covenant-relationship with God is presupposed here, and, if so, whether it is fundamental. A hostile reader might go even further, and ask whether the real God and master in this book is not Man himself, and the real goal prosperity.

Although this last question can be answered quite quickly, it is not enough to point to the recurrent motto: 'the fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge' (i. 7 and parallels); for this could be itself a mere counsel of prudence, a crowning example of a policy of cultivating the powers that be. The answer is seen rather in the relation throughout the book of prudential considerations to moral. It is the moral that always take precedence. To be sure, Proverbs is concerned to point out that what is right and what pays may travel long distances together, but it leaves us in no doubt which we are to follow when their paths diverge. It is in no hurry to anticipate that point. E.g. on the question of gifts and bribes, it will go as far as to say, without demur, 'A man's gift (מַתָּן) maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men' (xviii. 16); but it will not go a step further. 'A wicked man', says xvii. 23, 'taketh a bribe (שֹׁחַד) out of the bosom, to pervert the ways of justice' – and it is at once clear that justice, not success, is our proper concern, and that the unscrupulous will get no praise for their fancied wisdom. You have to be good to be wise – though Proverbs is

[1] Being the substance of a paper read to the Old Testament Study Group, 1960.

particularly concerned to point out the converse: that you have to be wise to be fully good. To take it further back, you have to be *godly* to be wise; and this is not because godliness pays, but because the only wisdom by which you can handle everyday things in conformity with their nature is the wisdom by which the LORD Himself made and ordered them. Proverbs viii, which states this superlatively, is therefore far from being a non-functional pinnacle of the book's eloquence, but an exposure of a large part of the framework of its thought.

So far, it appears that God is no afterthought here, and goodness no poor relation to cleverness. But are we left with nothing stronger than moralistic theism? An indication of the answer appears as soon as the sayings which mention God are searched out. Of about 100 such proverbs, all but a dozen use the covenant name YHWH. As far as terminology goes, then, the book belongs unashamedly to the Covenant People. When God's activities and attitudes are examined, the findings are similar. Three times He appears as the 'Maker' of rich and poor alike; and at first we are on ground that is shared by many religions. Xiv. 31 and xvii. 5 state that he who oppresses or mocks the poor man reproaches his Maker. But xxii. 2 moves on: 'The rich and poor meet together: YHWH is the maker of them all'. What was broached in merely theistic terms has become explicitly Yahwistic. A further step is taken in xxii. 23 where the vindication of the poor is based not on the idea of a common Maker, but on the personal interest of YHWH. 'YHWH will plead their cause'. (Cf. xxiii. 11, 'for their *go'el* is strong: he shall plead their cause against thee'.) So we are not left with merely the kind of inference that might suggest itself to any Gentile who had got as far as the idea of a sole Creator. Such an argument is not disdained, but it is supported by a declaration based on YHWH's known character. The same kind of thing happens in Agur's oracle. In xxx. 1–4 he is reduced to awed agnosticism before the creator's handiwork: '. . . Neither have I knowledge of the Holy One' (a quite general title for the Deity). '. . . What is his name, and his son's name if thou knowest?' But he has not been left to an Unknown God. He has come to this point in order to speak of God's reliable and sufficient revelation: verses 5, 6, 'Every word of God is tried; . . . add not thou to His words';

and it soon emerges that he too knows God as YHWH (9). This is not Natural but Revealed Religion.

There is no need to deny that many of the functions of YHWH in Proverbs are functions which any religion would attribute to its gods. It is common belief that one's God is Maker and Disposer, and the Protector of the poor. What is noteworthy is, rather, that Proverbs has no interest in moving into this neutral territory except to claim it for YHWH.

So far, we have seen that the God of this book is confessedly and emphatically the God who revealed His name to Moses. It remains to enquire whether the basis and form of His dealings with men appear to be those of the Covenant. If we can find indications that there is a stable relationship assumed, filial on man's side, rather than servile, we shall have found as much as a collection of proverbs can be expected to yield.

We may start with the motto, and ask whether the 'fear' of the LORD implies anything more than a healthy respect for the Almighty. It does. In two passages, ii.5 and ix. 10, it is made synonymous with the '*knowledge*' of YHWH or of The Holy One – a knowledge which is given by revelation ('out of His mouth', ii. 6), and fostered by obedience ('The upright are in His confidence', i.e. His סוֹד, His intimate circle, iii. 32) and by what could be called the practice of His presence: iii. 6, 'In all thy ways acknowledge Him' – literally, 'know' Him, which means more than acknowledge: rather, enjoy fellowship. We are reminded of the goal of the New Covenant: 'they shall all know Me'.

Such intercourse 'in all (one's) ways' implies, in addition to reverence and obedience, *trust*; and it is notable that Proverbs, for all its emphasis on common sense, exalts faith above sagacity (iii. 5, 7, 'Trust in YHWH with all thine heart; and upon thine own understanding lean not; . . . Be not wise in thine own eyes' . . .); and for all its advocacy of prudence it refuses prudence the last word. Planning, proper as it is ('Plans are established by counsel: by wise guidance wage war', xx. 18) – planning is subject to *God's* Yes or No (xix. 21, 'Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of YHWH that will be established'); equipment guarantees nothing (xxi. 31, 'The horse is prepared against the day of battle, but safety is of

the LORD'); and caution can be fatal in a way that faith cannot ('The fear of man bringeth a snare; but they that trust in YHWH shall be safe', xxix. 25). Such teaching is virtually that of Isaiah in his dealings with those who looked to Assyria or to the horses of Egypt for help; indeed, one writer can declare that the object of his maxims is to foster not self-reliance but faith: 'That thy trust may be in YHWH I have made them known to thee' (xxii. 19).

This faith is not regarded as a last resort; and it is more than a useful habit of mind: it can be traced, here and there in Proverbs, down to its roots in a steady relationship of exactly the kind which the Covenant established between God and man. There is admittedly only one mention of the covenant in the book, and even this shows the human participant in an all too characteristic position: ii. 16, 17, 'the strange woman . . . which forsaketh the friend of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God'. It may be asked whether this is merely a reference to the marriage covenant which God witnessed (Mal. ii. 14); but the natural sense of the words favours the general covenant, and the expression 'strange women' does not require us to suppose that a non-Israelite is being specified; it is, rather, a standing term for what we might call an adventuress, one who has no right in your circle (cf. Dt. xxv. 5). In any case, God is referred to as '*her* God', and it is this that makes her sin specially heinous. The same personal bond with God is prominent in Agur's thoughts, immediately after the passage to which earlier reference was made (xxx. 7–9). His fear is not so much of isolated sins (though he does abhor them) as of a breach of loyalty: 'lest I *deny* Thee' – for the LORD is not simply 'God' to him, but '*my* God' (9c). This is the essence of covenant language. The quintessence is found in the statement of father-and-son relationship in iii. 11, 12: 'My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his reproof: For whom the LORD loveth he reproveth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth'.

The covenant idea leaves traces of itself elsewhere. Parallel to such universal terms of moral approval as 'righteous' and 'upright', we find (just once, but it is there, and must be accounted for) the special term for the true son of the covenant, the חָסִיד

(ii. 8: 'He preserveth the way of His *ḥasidîm*') – an unobtrusive witness to the bond. If it is objected that these sayings, from chs. ii and xxx, lie in subsidiary strata of the book, it can be replied that xvi. 6, from the heart of the main Solomonic section, speaks the same covenant language: 'By loyalty (חֶסֶד) and faithfulness iniquity is atoned for, and by the fear of YHWH a man turns aside from evil'.

This last quotation raises a final question. Granted that in Proverbs the covenant relationship is assumed, is it a purely private bond which has no place for the institutions of Israelite religion? We have just heard that iniquity is atoned for (יְכֻפַּר) by חֶסֶד; and in xxi. 3 we are told that 'To do justice and judgment is more acceptable to YHWH than sacrifice'. On these two sayings it is enough to remark, first, that this is the language of the prophets, and secondly, that the marriage of religion and morality is well expressed in xv. 8: 'The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination to YHWH, but the prayer of the upright is his delight'.

Nor is this a religion (as indeed we have already seen) without revelation. In a similar saying to the last we find the *Torah* exalted: 'He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination' (xxviii. 9). Proverbs is at pains to show that the unaided spirit of man is a very uncertain 'candle of the LORD' (xx. 27); that what is right in a man's own eyes may be morally or factually miscalculated (xxi. 2 '. . . but YHWH pondereth the hearts'; xiv. 12, 'but its end is the way to death'). Therefore where the law of God has been given, no one but a scoundrel can reject it (xxviii. 4, 'Those who forsake the law praise the wicked'). As for a people deprived of revelation, xxix. 18 holds out little hope for them. 'Where there is no vision' (an apparent allusion to the gift of prophecy) 'the people run wild; but he that keepeth the law' (the other main form of Old Testament revelation), 'happy is he'.

To end on this note, however, would be to disguise the fact that the explicitly religious material has to be hand-picked from a large mass of sayings in which religion is only implicit. And we should do Proverbs a poor service if we contrived to vest it in a priestly ephod or a prophet's mantle, for it is a book which seldom takes you to church. Like its own figure of Wisdom, it

calls across to you in the street about some everyday matter, or points things out at home. Its function in Scripture is to put godliness into working clothes; to name business and society as spheres in which we are to acquit ourselves with credit to our Lord, and in which we are to look for His training.

If we could analyse the influences that build up a godly character to maturity, we might well find that the agencies which we call natural vastly outweighed those that we call supernatural. It is a familiar phenomenon that a sheltered man of great devoutness may not in a lifetime notice (still less, be delivered from) the defects of character which a few years of rougher treatment might have cured in his youth. The Book of Proverbs reassures us that this, if it is true, is no reflection on the efficiency of God's grace, for the hard facts of life, which knock some of the nonsense out of us, are *God's* facts and His appointed school of character: they are not alternatives to His grace, but means of it.

Yet while all go to God's school, few learn wisdom there. God may have His staff, His curriculum and His prizes; but the knowledge which He aims to instil is the knowledge of Himself; and this too is the ultimate prize. In submission to His authority and majesty (that is, in 'the fear of the LORD') we start our education, as the motto verse indicates, and by the diligent search for wisdom 'as for hid treasures' we shall find our reward in a growing intimacy with the same LORD. He is the beginning; He is also the end: 'Then shalt thou understand the fear of YHWH, and find the knowledge of God' (ii. 5).

*The Everlasting Covenant**

by D. F. PAYNE

THIS PAPER is a brief investigation into the relationship between the concepts of the 'everlasting' and the 'new' covenants of Scripture. The first term, בְּרִית עוֹלָם, occurs more than a dozen times in the Old Testament, and just once, διαθήκη αἰώνιος, in the New. The latter instance involves no real doctrinal teaching – it is merely a phrase in a benediction: 'Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will . . .'[1] The phrase is, then, distinctively Old Testament in character, however implicit in New Testament doctrine. On the other hand, the phrase 'New Covenant', בְּרִית חֲדָשָׁה, occurs once only in the Old Testament – Je. xxxi. 31 – but is found several times in the New Testament, both in the Gospels, at the institution of the Eucharist, and also in the Epistle to the Hebrews. And of course the Greek phrase καινή διαθήκη, has given the New Testament its very name. There can be no doubt, however, that the New Testament references are all based on the passage in Jeremiah, and it is true to say that this concept too is Old Testament, at least in origin.

A glance at the Scofield Reference Bible indicates that to Scofield, at any rate, there was little distinction between the two ideas; the mention of an everlasting covenant in Is. lxi. 8, for instance, is classified under the heading 'Covenant (New)'. It is of course true that Je. xxxi. 31 must be taken together with Is. lxi. 8; Je. xxxii. 37ff. and Ezk. xvi. 60. Clearly the Prophets of this period anticipated the inauguration of a new era in God's relationship with Israel in which there would be a new covenant between the two contracting parties which would last for ever.

* Being the substance of a paper read to the Tyndale Fellowship Old Testament Group, 1960.

[1] Heb. xiii. 20f.

The everlasting covenants of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, then, lay in the future, and could be both new and eternal. But what of previous covenants styled 'everlasting'? Surely the new era predicted by Jeremiah would render the ancient covenants outmoded and obsolete, or at any rate obsolescent, to paraphrase Heb. viii. 13? If so, in what sense – if any – were these ancient covenants 'everlasting'? Is not Is. xxiv. 5 a contradiction in terms, in fact? 'The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants; for they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant'.

The solution is simple if we translate בְּרִית עוֹלָם 'covenant of indefinite duration'; in other words, the phrase may imply nothing more than that the contracts so described, though concluded with a specific individual (or generation), affected his (or its) posterity as well. A good Old Testament example is the case of Phinehas, who earned God's approval, and received a 'covenant of a perpetual priesthood', בְּרִית כְּהֻנַּת עוֹלָם[2]. This covenant could only last so long as male issue of Phinehas survived; once his line died out, the covenant automatically terminated.

But can we accept this interpretation in every case? The answer must surely be no, in view of the Old Testament stress on the importance and irrevocability of the spoken word. If man's word could not be recalled – as in the case of Joshua and the Gibeonites,[3] or Jephthah and his daughter[4] – *a fortiori* the Almighty's promises and contracts could not lightly be set aside. It is entirely foreign to Old Testament thought that God's covenants should be of limited duration. Furthermore, promises made to Israel ought presumably to endure so long as the nation endures. Might the explanation not be, then, that if one party to the contract defaulted, the Other was no longer under any obligation? No, the same objection still holds; this is made quite clear by such verses as Ezk. xvi. 59f., 'Thus says the Lord GOD: I will deal with you as you have done, who have despised the oath in breaking the covenant, yet I will remember my covenant with you . . . and I will establish with you an

[2] Nu. xxv. 13.
[3] Jos. ix.
[4] Jdg. xi.

everlasting covenant'. (In passing, it should be pointed out that the Hebrew verb here translated 'establish' is הֵקִים, which usually means to 'establish' a covenant, but once or twice means to 'confirm' one, e.g. in Dt. viii. 18. Perhaps here in Ezk. xvi. 60 הֵקִים should be translated 'confirm'.) In the New Testament, Paul makes a similar statement in Rom. xi. 29: 'The gifts and the call of God are irrevocable'. God cannot deny Himself.

Another possible solution is that the word 'new', חֲדָשָׁה in Je. xxxi. 31 needs re-interpreting. Can we legitimately translate it 'renewed'? In other words, did Jeremiah envisage restoration or innovation? If restoration, then Jeremiah expected little or nothing more than the revival of the ancient covenant. This possibility will need careful examination; the question is by no means merely an academic one, for Christian and Jewish apologetics are completely opposed on the interpretation of Je. xxxi. 31. What we call the New Testament is politely called הַבְּרִית הַחֲדָשָׁה, for convenience, by Hebrew-speaking Jews; at the same time, a non-Jew, Christian or otherwise, may be described as אינו בן־ברית, 'not a son of the covenant'. The reference in such a phrase is probably to circumcision, which is always referred to as ברית, the 'covenant' of circumcision. Covenant, meaning a relationship, appears relatively little in Rabbinic literature, possibly because of the use of Je. xxxi. 31 in the New Testament and Christian theology, or merely because the relationship is basic to Judaism. The right relationship with God could only be found in a right relationship with the community, הצבור. The advice of Hillel was ever 'Separate not thyself from the community', אל־תפרש עצמך מן־הצבור[5]. The word ברית in Judaism is used regularly for a rite, especially those of circumcision and Sabbath observance.

The Damascus 'Covenanters' claimed that the prophecy of Jeremiah found its fulfilment in their company; but they certainly considered themselves to be in the direct and true Old Testament line, and would never have made such a statement as Heb. viii. 13. This interesting branch of Judaism, then, saw nothing intrinsically new in their covenant. Orthodox Judaism likewise repudiates any but the ancient Sinaitic covenant. Thus both Qumran and the centres of Rabbinic learning might prefer

[5] Mishnah, *Aboth*, ii. 5.

to translate חָדָשָׁה 'renewed' in Je. xxxi. 31. As Christians, however, we should perhaps hesitate to accept this solution to the problem, especially in view of Heb. viii. 13. To be sure, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews was after all striving to convince his readers of the superiority of Christianity over Judaism, and therefore needed to be outspoken. Is it possible that he exaggerated the position somewhat?

As has already been stated, Jeremiah alone in the Old Testament describes the covenant as 'new'. G. Pidoux, however, makes the following statement: 'Repeatedly in the course of history, the covenant is renewed by impressive ceremonies: by Joshua on Ebal and Gerizim, by Josiah, by Ezra and Nehemiah.'[6] Will these incidents throw any light on the problem? Were the incidents listed by Pidoux mere restorations, or were they the inaugurations of something new, involving innovations? The first of them, recorded in Jos. viii. 30–35, helps us not at all; it was merely a renewal, and in fact the word 'covenant' is not mentioned. Ne. viii records a restoration, after the Babylonian exile, when a new beginning was clearly necessary, yet the details were intended to follow the ancient lapsed pattern as closely as possible; here again the word 'covenant' does not appear. The third incident, related in 2 Ki. xxiii, is more interesting. King Josiah, putting into effect the Book of the Covenant, as it is called, proceeds to make a covenant with Yahweh. The English versions convey the impression that he made a new covenant here, the RSV for example rendering 'The king stood by the pillar and made a covenant'.[7] The Hebrew is לִפְנֵי יְהוָה וַיִּכְרֹת אֶת־הַבְּרִית, the word 'covenant' having the definite article. Ambiguity results; the article might be proleptic, as the English versions take it, or it could make the covenant the existing one, the old Sinaitic covenant. But even on the assumption that the English versions are correct, the question is in no way resolved, for two reasons. First, this covenant was made by Josiah, not by God (as was Jeremiah's), so was inevitably new as far as he was concerned – his covenant was, in fact, new to him, but the ancient covenant as far as God was concerned. Second, even if Josiah's covenant was not

[6] *Vocabulary of the Bible*, ed. von Allmen, p. 66.

[7] 2 Ki. xxiii. 3.

an innovation of any sort, it does not necessarily follow that Jeremiah's was not intended to be, for the speedy failure of Josiah's reforms may well have led Jeremiah to believe that something quite new, and not merely renewed, was essential.

A philological investigation makes it clear that the word 'covenant' is sometimes virtually synonymous with 'commandment'. God 'commands' (צִוָּה) a covenant, which man must 'observe' (שָׁמַר or נָצַר) and not 'break' (שָׁבַר) or 'transgress' (עָבַר בְּ). Is. xxiv. 5, already quoted, corroborates this, setting the word 'covenant' in parallelism with 'laws' (תּוֹרוֹת) and 'ordinance' (חֹק). Elsewhere בְּרִית is apparently used in a more concrete sense: God sets it up (הֵקִים or שָׂם), and man either clings to it (הֶחֱזִיק) or else treats it lightly, in a variety of ways, forgetting it (שָׁכַח), forsaking it (עָזַב), being false to it (שָׁקַר בְּ), rejecting and despising it (מָאַס), or even making it valueless (הפֵר). This last verb has a variety of meanings – annul, frustrate, break, destroy, render ineffectual.

What of the Almighty's attitude to a covenant once established? We are repeatedly told that He remembers it (זָכַר), in contrast to man's forgetfulness. The implication is again that it is a concrete object of a permanent character. God states that He will never destroy Israel utterly, thus breaking His covenant with them.[8] Only in two passages in the Old Testament does God appear to break His covenant. The first is in Ps. lxxxix. 39, where the writer tells God, 'Thou hast renounced the covenant with thy servant'. The verb is נָאַר, which means to 'abhor' or 'spurn'. But that the action is only temporary is evidenced by verse 46, 'How long, O LORD?', and especially by verse 34, where God says, 'I will not violate my covenant', using the much stronger verb חִלֵּל. The other instance is Zc. xi. 10, in the passage about the two staffs: 'I took my staff Grace, and I broke it, annulling the Covenant which I had made'. The verb here is הפֵר, so it might seem that this verse contradicts Lv. xxvi. 44 and other similar passages. Zechariah is not a Prophet who exhibits a great deal of optimism, but in the following chapter, verses 6ff., we have a rather happier picture; and it may well be that Zechariah had in mind a temporary setting aside of the covenant. At any rate, apart from this highly poetic and

[8] Lv. xxvi. 44.

pictorial passage, there is no hint elsewhere in the Old Testament of God going back on His own covenant.

Finally, let us examine some of the everlasting covenants in the Old Testament. Though constantly referring back, the Prophets look forward to future covenants. The historical references are nearly all to be found in the Pentateuch, with the notable exception of the Davidic covenant, recorded in 2 Sa. xxiii. 5. There are several allusions to these historical covenants in the Psalms too. There are in fact three covenants designated 'everlasting', the Noahic, the Abrahamic and the Davidic. The first of these is recorded in Gn. ix: God promised not to send another Deluge, and made the rainbow the sign of His covenant. This covenant was of world-wide scope, and has never been abrogated. The Davidic covenant of 2 Sa. xxiii gives few details, but more are added in Ps. lxxxix. 28, where it is styled נֶאֱמָנָה ('firm'), a unique description, and in Is. lv. 3–5. Did the Jews see in the fall of the Davidic line under Nebuchadnezzar the termination of this everlasting covenant? On the contrary, more than five centuries later a Messiah of David's house was still expected to occupy the throne. Qumran expected two Messiahs, perhaps, with the emphasis on the one from the House of Aaron, but a Davidic Messiah was not excluded from their beliefs. The early church, of course, saw in Jesus of Nazareth the fulfilment of this prophecy. Paul in the synagogue at Pisidian Antioch clearly referred to Is. lv. 3, the 'steadfast, sure love for David' as finding fulfilment in Jesus. Thus we can see that Christian theology did not consider the everlasting covenant abrogated; far from it. It seems unlikely, then, that the early church – and its Founder – would claim this covenant as immutable, and yet brush aside as of no importance the other, the Abrahamic. It can only be this covenant that Jeremiah viewed as renewed or replaced (whichever is the truth of the matter). The Noahic was universal in scope, the Davidic individual, the Abrahamic – renewed, of course, with Isaac and Jacob, and at Sinai – was national. Gn. xvii. 7ff. relates that Canaan was to be the national home, YHWH the national God, and circumcision the sign of this everlasting covenant. The question is, then, whether the New Testament writers considered this covenant displaced and replaced. In some senses,

perhaps, the answer is yes. Yet notice how careful our Lord was to state that He had not come to break the Law but to fulfil it; notice how the Church was considered to be the true fulfilment of the old Israel in every respect. Gentile believers are the children of Abraham through faith; they are fellow-citizens with the (Old Testament) saints; they are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people. Gal. vi. 16 even speaks of the Church as the Israel of God. The inclusion of the Gentiles now had after all been adumbrated in the promise of God to Abraham that all nations should find blessing[9] ultimately; so the New Testament order fulfils the Abrahamic covenant in a way that Judaism has never done. This is Peter's boast in Acts iii. 25. In applying the spiritual aspects Jeremiah had predicted, purely ethnic details (such as Canaan and circumcision) might disappear, but the kernel of the everlasting covenant remained undamaged. Paul does insist, however, in Rom. xi that the literal Israel could never be completely ousted by the spiritual.

A New Covenant? Yes, but only the unimportant details of the 'Old' were obsolescent, and even the author of Hebrews apparently could not quite bring himself to call the Old Covenant 'obsolete'.

It is the relationship between God and man that is the permanent feature – call it a covenant if you will. Whatever happened, however much man failed to keep his obligations, that relationship still existed. Hosea did not divorce Gomer; so in Is. l. 1 we read that Yahweh had not divorced Israel – Israel had (temporarily) effected a separation. (Here again in Is. l. 1 note the concrete associations. The demand for concrete evidence of divorce would indicate that there was as it were a marriage certificate that could be produced on demand.) But such separations did repeatedly occur, necessitating quasi-remarriage. But through it all, the basic relationship never varied. So בְּרִית as a relationship was everlasting; but where בְּרִית means a reconciliation ceremony, there could be, and indeed were, more than one.

[9] Gn. xxii. 18.

Hellenistic Influence in the Epistle to the Hebrews[1]

by Alan M. Fairhurst

WHEN WE REFER to Hellenistic influence in this connection I assume that we have in mind primarily the influence which derived from Plato. This had obviously been through various phases by the time this epistle was written, and the most likely channel of its communication would have been through the Alexandrian scholar Philo, who died about 50 A.D. He was a great exegete of the Old Testament, but his greatness was somewhat qualified by his desire to find in it a complete philosophical system equal to that of the Greeks. He was a great apologist, but had many of the weaknesses of those who indulge in special pleading. Another possible source of Greek influence could have been the Greek mystery cults, but this is always difficult to assess as we lack accurate documentation.

Amongst those who have written in English on this subject I would accord pride of place to Prof C. K. Barrett's brilliant essay entitled *The Eschatology of the Epistle to the Hebrews*.[2] William Manson's book on the epistle, published in 1951, ascribes to Hellenistic influence only a limited place. With this position Prof. Barrett is in agreement, although his treatment is far more extensive and detailed. Héring would be far less in agreement. One of the real champions of Hellenistic influence was James Moffatt, whose commentary on the book was published in the International Critical Commentary in 1924. It is easy to underrate the work of Moffatt on this epistle, but it ought never to be despised, for it is supported by weighty

[1] Being the substance of a paper read to the New Testament Study Group, July, 1959.

[2] To be found in the volume published in honour of Prof. C. H. Dodd called *The background of the New Testament and its eschatology* edited by W. D. Davies and D. Daube. This essay was published in 1956 and deserves to be widely known. Another article in the same volume also considers Greek influence. It is by J. Héring, who has also written a commentary on the book in French.

scholarship. In his introduction Moffatt argues at length his contention that 'the philosophical element in his view of the world and God is fundamentally Platonic.' Westcott in his famous commentary of 1889 is far more guarded and does not commit himself in this direction. Also of crucial importance is Oscar Cullmann's book *Christ and Time* published in 1945. He is vigorous in denying Hellenistic influence in this sphere. On the sacramental aspect of the epistle Prof. C. F. D. Moule's book *The Sacrifice of Christ* and the several works of N. Dimock are relevant. Amongst foreign work on the epistle which bears on the subject of Hellenistic influence the two volumes of Spicq are a mine of information.

Hellenistic influence in the epistle may have affected cosmology, chronology, soteriology, typology, and even Christology. It may significantly have influenced the eschatological framework of the epistle. It has undoubtedly been an influence on the style of the writer. This is such a contrast, in its elegance and polish, to the rest of the New Testament that it is not difficult to agree with Moffatt's analysis of the style in his introduction, at least in its main outline. However it is not the style of the epistle that really concerns us, although it has a bearing on the question of authorship and place of composition. If this could be solved it would of course help enormously in this whole question, but in the absence of any certainty it would be idle to speculate on the extent to which all the possible candidates may have been familiar with Plato and Philo and other Hellenistic influence. Of them all Apollos has the best claim to such acquaintance by virtue of his Alexandrian origin.[3]

Because the epistle is so closely reasoned it is not possible to isolate subjects where there might be Hellenistic influence with any precision; so they will be treated more or less together. The main question is whether Plato's view of the Two Worlds is to be found in the epistle as the dominating influence or not. If it is to be found, as Moffatt found it, we must ask whether it is truly integrated with the eschatology of the writer. Certain passages do suggest a Platonic relationship between Two Worlds. If the Platonic influence was the primary one all the main themes in the epistle would have to show a Platonic

[3] Acts xviii. 24.

relationship of a heavenly type and an earthly antitype. Thus the earthly tabernacle, the sabbath rest, and the holy city would have to be the perfect images of the heavenly sanctuary, the eternal rest and the heavenly city.

Taking the sabbath rest (σαββατισμός, iv. 9) first we can say that the correspondence between the sabbath and the sabbath rest is not only Platonic, if it is Platonic at all. The main influence would appear to be the Old Testament seen through the eyes of primitive Christian eschatology. Prof. Barrett (*op. cit.*, pp. 366–373) demonstrates that the handling of the Old Testament here is different from both Philo and Barnabas. For the writer the rest is both now in existence and it is to come. By faith it can be entered now (iv. 1, 3) and yet it still remains for Christians to strive to enter it (iv. 9–11). This is in keeping with the whole tenor of New Testament eschatology. For instance we might consider the teaching on the kingdom in the Gospels, which is both present in some sense already, and yet Christians are to pray for its coming. It is evident that the relationship between the sabbath (Gk. σάββατον) and the sabbath rest is not a straightforward Platonic one if we study iv. 1–10 carefully. Here the earthly rest with which the heavenly rest is contrasted is in fact not the sabbath itself (σάββατον) but the rest (κατάπαυσις) which Joshua had failed to give the people of Israel after their wanderings (iv. 8). This word for rest (κατάπαυσις) is also used for God's rest (iii. 11, 18; iv. 1, 3, 4, 5), but it is not a rest of which the sabbath is a copy. It is a rest which God was willing to share with His people, and not merely let them share a copy of it. It was 'my rest' that they could not enter (iii. 11, etc.). So we conclude that although the rest (κατάπαυσις) is linked with God resting the seventh day (iv. 4) and although there remains a sabbath rest (σάββατον; a word which occurs here only in the New Testament, iv. 9) the contrast is not drawn with the actual sabbath (σάββατον), which would have been very Platonic, but with the entry into the promised land, which was a far more dynamic and eschatological concept.

When we come to the case of the city it is even harder to show an exact Platonic relationship. It is true that the heavenly Jerusalem is spoken of as already existing (xii. 22). It is the

city of the living God. But the writer does not explicitly speak of the earthly city as being a pattern of this. What he does say is that 'here we have no lasting city but we seek the city which is to come' (xiii. 14). As with the sabbath rest Prof. Barrett (pp. 373 ff.) shows that the author's treatment of the city is eschatological. It is both now to be entered (xii. 22) and it is a city which is to come and which is sought by pilgrims (xi. 14-16). Prof. Barrett traces the development of this hope back to exilic times and to Rabbinic literature. This is to be found in the standard works on the subject and references are cited on p. 374. He points out that while the references are to works which are later than Hebrews 'the notion of a heavenly Jerusalem is early' and this 'is proved beyond doubt by Rev. iii. 12; xxi. 2, 10 and especially by Gal. iv. 26, where Paul introduces the "Jerusalem which is from above" with no explanation, assuming the thought to be completely familiar' (p. 375). He goes on to say that although the Jewish sources are silent about the exact relationship 'we may without hesitation conclude that, according to Jewish thought, there exists a heavenly city, of which the present earthly Jerusalem is an inferior copy; and that in the future this heavenly city will in some way be manifested as the Jerusalem of the age to come. This *complex* dualism is characteristic of apocalyptic, and it is precisely this dualism (and not a Platonic dualism) which appears in Hebrews' (pp. 375 f.).

The heart of the debate centres round the heavenly and the earthly sanctuary, and here there is more support in the text. The main passages are viii. 1–5 and ix. 23–24. The earthly sanctuary is a 'copy and a shadow' (ὑποδείγματι καὶ σκιᾷ) of the heavenly sanctuary (viii. 5). William Manson in his book on the epistle sketches the probable background of these passages (pp. 124 f.). The idea of sacrificial worship in heaven was a familiar one in Judaism, from the time when Moses was shown the pattern on the mount.[4] He then goes on to say that this idea would be developed at Alexandria under the influence of Plato's doctrine of ideas, especially as set out in the Timaeus, and combined with Jewish midrashic traditions to produce a philosophical and highly edifying exegesis such as we find in

[4] Ex. xxv. 40.

Philo's 'de opificio mundi'. He concludes, 'but while it is right to see in the Alexandrian Jewish theology the background against which the conception of the two worlds in the epistle to the Hebrews is elaborated, it has to be carefully observed that the interests of the writer to the Hebrews are not in cosmology but in redemption, and that his exposition of the heavenly sanctuary is put into entire subservience to his exposition of the sacrifice and atoning work of Jesus within the veil. The element of Alexandrianism does not enter the epistle until this point is reached and is not continued after this point is passed. . . . Not the nature of reality, but the advent of the end is the dominating concern of the writer. For him the eternal world stands essentially in front of us, IMPENDING on us as immediate apocalyptic event, and if he brings in the idea of its present heavenly circumstance, it is because Jesus has already gone into the world of light as our "forerunner"' (pp. 124 f.). This seems to be a very fair assessment. Prof. Barrett sums up in a similar fashion: 'the heavenly tabernacle and its ministrations are from one point of view eternal archetypes, from another, they are eschatological events.' (p. 385).

We cannot deny the Hellenistic background usage of words like 'shadow' (σκιά) in viii. 5, 'copy (ὑπόδειγμα) in viii. 5 and ix. 23 (though it is most interesting to note that attic writers used παράδειγμα, cf. Plato Timaeus 37c where there might be a close link), and 'image' (εἰκών) in x. 1 (for which passage Moffatt cites a very similar usage and verbal similarity in Plato's Cratylus 306E). Heavenly realities are 'true' (ἀληθινά) ; on earth they are 'copies' (ὑποδείγματα) or antitype (ἀντίτυπα) (ix. 23f.).

Again it is the eschatological framework which needs emphasis. As Manson remarks, redemption not cosmology is the overriding interest. And the discussion of sacrifice and its heavenly significance is not Platonic. Moreover, the epistle shows a definite temporal relationship between the earthly and the heavenly sphere, as we have already had occasion to observe in connection with the sabbath rest. In Greek thought it would have been entirely inappropriate to apply categories of time to the heavenly sphere, which was essentially timeless. Not so here. In Hebrews Christ enters the heavenly sphere and sits

down (i. 3) having made purification for sins. The death of Christ on the earthly sphere is not a manifestation of something which goes on eternally. The writer is careful to point this out in a passage which requires the closest attention. In ix. 24–26 we are told in the strongest terms that Christ does not offer Himself repeatedly in heaven 'for then He would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world' (ix. 26). His sacrifice once for all[5] in the sphere of time, although it has eternal validity in that He offered Himself through the eternal Spirit (ix. 14) (taking this to refer to the Holy Spirit and not to the eternal realm in a Platonic sense, although some do take it thus). This chronological framework, so different from Greek ideas (although not the early Homeric picture where gods and men live in the same time sequence), still awaits its due completion. 'Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who eagerly await Him' (ix. 28).

Prof. Barrett again shows that Philo and Barnabas treat the Jewish temple and its heavenly counterpart in a way different from Hebrews. Philo speaks of the timeless reality of heaven whereas Barnabas emphasizes the subjective religious experience. Hebrews on the other hand 'insists on the eschatological act, a thing done in time with objective and corporate consequences' and 'that such an objective and corporate act as he describes was necessary in order to take away the objective and universal guilt of mankind. For him, what lies between heaven and earth, God and man, is not the difference between the phenomena of sense perception and pure being, but the difference between holiness and sin' (p. 388). Sense perception is in fact discussed later in the epistle but there it is in connection with faith (xi. 3). But surely Prof. Barrett is right in his point about sin. In his introduction Moffatt speaks of the writer's profound sense of sin (p. xlv). It is far more likely that it came from the Old Testament than from Plato.

This seems an appropriate place to discuss the chronological question further. The writer is not concerned, as we have seen, with contrasting the earthly time sphere with the timelessness of the heavenly sphere, as Plato does in the Timaeus. Life with

[5] Note continual use of ἅπαξ and ἐφάπαξ in the epistle.

God is not a blessed escape from time, as Greek thought conceived it. The things which are eternal are the relationships between God and man and they are entered upon in the time sphere. It is interesting that the word 'eternal' (αἰώνιος) is used with 'salvation' (v. 9) 'Spirit' (ix. 14) 'redemption' (ix. 12) and 'covenant' (xiii. 20). Of these the most difficult reference is that of ix. 14, which we have already mentioned. Moffatt makes much of this (p. xliii, p. 124). It is, however, we venture to think, not so much that the writer is emphasizing the fact that the sacrifice was offered in the timeless sphere as the fact that it was eternally valid. The sacrifice was once for all. 'Eternal' draws attention to the fact that it partakes of the very life of God Himself. Thus it does not pass away. The barrier of sin is done away and the way to God lies open for us to approach with boldness (iv. 16).

Cullmann in his book maintains that the Greek view of time does not show itself in the epistle, and that the invisible is thought of in terms of time and not of space (p. 54, Eng. trans.). He maintains that the καιρός concept (one of the Greek words for time, but in the N.T. emphasizing opportunity) is not Hellenistic.

Chronology is notoriously difficult to understand and not all agree with Cullmann, who may well oversimplify with his idea of the 'upward sloping line' to describe Biblical thought in contrast with a 'circle' to describe Greek thought (p. 51). It is a real problem how something done in a moment of time can have permanent significance. But it is equally clear that we must have adequate safeguards against importing ideas which may be in direct conflict with the argument of the epistle. The use of 'today' in iii. 13 is difficult but Moffatt shows some very interesting Rabbinic parallels (p. 46). The implication that the present age will pass away is certainly eschatological (ix. 9). The conclusion of the present age will be brought about by the appearance of Christ a second time (ix. 28). Then all things will be put in subjection under His feet (ii. 7–8). The passing away of the present age will be an eschatological event and the writer looks back to Haggai ii. 6 when he writes of it (xii. 26–7). He notes that some things cannot be shaken (xii. 27) but the heavens will be (xii. 26). I am not sure if Plato would have put

it like that. What is unshakeable is the Kingdom. And that is received now (xii. 28).

The typology of the epistle is a very difficult subject, as is seen by the number of recent publications (e.g. by Grant, Lampe, and Hanson) on this theme in the New Testament.[6] Perhaps the most interesting piece of typology in the epistle is the treatment of Melchizedek, as a type of Christ. Spicq comments (vol. ii, p. 207) that Philo's interpretation of Genesis xiv may provide a point of departure for the writer, but no more. The handling of the subject is the writer's own, and is very different from that of Philo. One point must be noted. The writer makes use of the argument from silence when dealing with Melchizedek (vii. 3). This was a common practice of Philo, as both Moffatt (pp. 91 f.) and Westcott (p. 201, n.1) remark. There are, however, Rabbinic parallels to this.[7] On the broader level it is very hard to believe that the allegorical intepretation of the scriptures, so popular with Philo, which was rejected by the Jews after his death, did not afford the writer many suggestive ways of using the Old Testament.

However that may be, the important point for our consideration is that the types look forward for the writer (e.g. the law is a shadow of good things to come, x. 1). They are not like the shadows in the cave in Plato's Republic. As Prof. Barrett writes, 'The shadows in his (the writer's) cave are all shadows of an event that happened once for all, the death of Jesus'. The handling of the high priest theme could never be the same in Hebrews and in Philo because of the clarity with which the writer had grasped the antitype, Jesus Christ. Moffatt admits that the treatment in the two is different (pp. xlvii ff., 38).

The treatment of the high priest theme in Hebrews affects the soteriology of the epistle not a little. In the old tabernacle the altar on which the animals were slain was outside the sanctuary and the Holy of Holies. The altar of incense was itself outside the Holy of Holies[8] in the Tabernacle as it was

[6] Reference should also be made to Daniélou's review of Hanson's book in *Theology*, July 1959.

[7] As R. A. Stewart points out in his thesis *Old Testament Usage in Hebrews, Philo and Rabbinic writers*, pp. 70f.

[8] Cf. Lv. xvi. 12.

also later in the Temple.[9] The writer follows the ritual of the day of Atonement in Lv. xvi as his type. It is therefore inappropriate to speak, as some do, of an altar inside the Holy of Holies on which sacrifice is made, and then to say that this refers to heaven and that therefore Christ is continually sacrificed before the Father. It is true that an altar and a lamb are seen in heaven in Rev. vii and viii, but the Lamb is in the midst of the throne (vii. 17) and the altar is the altar of incense (viii. 3). According to the ritual in Lv. xvi the altar of incense had to be sprinkled with blood together with the holy place itself (xvi. 15, 18). The main difficulty is that the writer to the Hebrews puts the altar of incense inside the Holy of Holies (ix. 4). The author of the Apocalypse, as we have just seen, seems to take it in the same way. This is hard to explain, but even so it does not excuse the loose use of the term 'altar' in sacramental theology today. For it seems often to be associated with the altar of sacrifice. This for the writer to the Hebrews was outside the type and the reality of the sanctuary. Thus the use of the term in liturgy often reveals a gross ignorance of Old Testament ritual and the use made of it by the writer in this epistle. The altar which Christians have, to which the writer alludes in xiii. 10 is anything but the crude altar of pagans. It is not one from which to eat because, as William Manson says (p. 150), 'the only analogy which the death of Christ has with the sacrifices of the past is limited to the whole burnt offering for sin, in which after the blood of the victims was carried by the High Priest into the Holy of Holies, their bodies were totally consumed by fire outside the camp of Israel.[10] Our altar then is the altar of our Saviour's martyrdom, "outside the camp" '. In any case the idea of Christ still officiating at an altar in heaven, at which He is still priest and victim, fails to take account of the once for all character of the death in the epistle and the explicit teaching in ix. 26, and also the continual emphasis on Christ's session at the right hand of God. His ministry is now one of intercession. Indeed the altar of incense inside the sanctuary emphasizes this very point. It consecrates our approach to God by His very presence and

[9] Lk. i. 11.

[10] Cf. Lv. xvi. 27.

by the eternal efficacy of the blood which has been sprinkled (ix. 24). This ministry continues until one day He appears again as the high priest of old to them that wait for Him (ix. 28). Thus it can be seen in the whole treatment of the death of Christ how Biblical the writer is, how unphilosophic and unspeculative, and how unlike the eternal world of Plato's ideas.

Before concluding it should be said that the writer does not appear to be influenced by the Greek mystery cults in any significant way. It is true that he uses terminology that was also used by the cults (e.g. τέλειος and φωτίζω) but this was common terminology and used by others also. Moffatt discounts any such influence, and suggests that the writer felt the same aversion as Philo (p. li), although Philo also on occasion would employ their terminology for his own purposes.

Such also are our conclusions in general about Hellenistic influence in the epistle. Terminology is used which is very reminiscent of Plato's Two Worlds, but the dominating ideas are drawn from other sources. It is not a question of the primitive Christian eschatology being an unfortunate and uncomfortable survivor in a perspective dominated by Plato. It provides the framework and controls the writer's thought. If this is not realized then, as Prof. Barrett concludes 'there can be no guarantee that the unique act of God in the weakness, humility and agony of His Son will remain central, or that the conviction will be maintained that through this act all things were made new and the powers of the age to come were released. But provided that this priority (of eschatological imagery) is maintained, Hebrews itself, as part of the New Testament canon, shows that the language of philosophy may be more serviceable in expressing Christian truth than some Biblical theologians are prepared to allow' (p. 393).

(NOTE. The work of R. A. Stewart in his thesis *Old Testament usage in Hebrews, Philo and Rabbinic writers* is to be obtained on request in the Anderson room of the University Library, Cambridge. All rights are reserved by the University. That is why little reference is made to it in this paper. The reference number is M.Lit.b70. Like Prof. Barrett, the writer stresses the kinship

with Rabbinic literature in the epistle, especially in view of his regard for the authority of the Old Testament. The whole work is of absolutely fundamental importance, and is particularly good in its treatment of cosmology in Plato, Philo and Hebrews. He sees links with Philo and also differences, but concludes that the key concepts of the epistle are Christian, not Rabbinic or Jewish.)

The Atonement in the Epistle to the Hebrews[1]

by Stephen S. Smalley

ONE OF THE many hymns written by Charles Wesley, that active member of the Oxford Methodists who none the less remained faithful to the Anglican Church, perfectly and vigorously expresses the quintessential nature of the reign and priesthood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Beginning 'Hail the day that sees Him rise', the hymn continues:

'Still for us He intercedes,
His prevailing death He pleads,
Near Himself prepares our place,
He the first-fruits of our race:
Alleluia!'

Here, in a moment, we are brought face to face with what is for the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews his central category of thought and interpretation, which draws together the theology of the Epistle and gives it its distinctive character. For him, 'priesthood' is more than a mere springboard for some disquisition on moral truth; it is life and spirit. It is no precious accident, indeed, that Dr. Alexander Nairne's famous work on this Epistle, an Epistle which almost begins as it ends with a reference to the priestly work of Christ, is called *The Epistle of Priesthood* (1915).

We shall not quarrel, I imagine, with those scholars who wish to place the Epistle to the Hebrews in a Judaic-Alexandrian setting. M. Clavier, in the new volume in memory of T. W. Manson, *New Testament Essays* (1959), notes that this ascription is scarcely contestable, 'et rarement contestée'. As it happens the Dean Emeritus of Jesus College in this University has queried the presence of a Jewish hand in the Epistle – 'a very strange Jew, if so' – but we may grant without doubt that

[1] Being the substance of a paper read at the Tyndale Fellowship's New Testament Group, July, 1959. First published in *The Evangelical Quarterly*, January 1961, pp. 34ff., and reprinted by permission.

our consideration of the Atonement in *Hebrews* must proceed against a background of contrasted world-orders as Platonic as it is Philonic. This will govern the writer's total conception of reality and finality with reference to the death of Christ, and give us the clue to his understanding of its significance.

In his article on 'The Eschatology of the Epistle to the Hebrews' in the Dodd *Festschrift*, to which we shall return, C. Kingsley Barrett has pointed out the link which exists in this Epistle between atonement and eschatology, and the close contact which is maintained as a result with the line of primitive Christian theology. We are, of course, already aware of the characteristic tension in *Hebrews* between ἐφάπαξ and πάντοτε in its theology of atonement. But it is significant that the priestly work of Christ on the Cross is seen by our writer not in splendid and discontinuous isolation, but as part of a whole redemptive movement initiated by the grace of God (2: 9, which is in fact the only reference to the love of God in the Epistle).

In the section 1: 1–10: 18, the writer expounds the doctrines of the person of Christ in terms of revelation (1–3), and the work of Christ in terms of redemption (4–10). And just as pre-existence and incarnation feature in the christological section, so the death of Christ in chapters 4–10 is conceived as the focus of a vast doctrinal sweep which begins with the incarnation, includes the exaltation and anticipates the second advent. The doctrinal summary which opens the Epistle, for example, places the reference to the καθαρισμὸν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν (1: 3) firmly within the context of descent and ascent, of Bethlehem and the Mount of Ascension. The same is true of 2: 9 where Christ's 'tasting of death for everyone' (R.S.V.) picks up the pattern of humiliation and exaltation which forms the basis of Psalm 8 – a pattern which finds its new fulfilment in Him who was made for a little time (or, with Westcott, 'a little', *ad loc.*) lower than the angels, and who was eventually crowned with glory and honour.

And this is of course an imperative part of the writer's theology of priesthood. He is steadily resisting any interpretation of the priestly office which regards it as simply institutional. But throughout his exposition of its eternal character, he is

equally anxious to safeguard any suggestion that Christ was sufficiently unlike any other priest for His ministry in these terms to become ineffectual. This is the reason for the famous insistence on the humanity of our Lord throughout the Epistle (4: 15, *passim*); and it leads Père Spicq in his commentary in the *Études Bibliques* series (1952) to conclude, in his note on 2: 14ff., that the death of Christ is 'envisagée dans le prolongement direct et comme immédiat dans l'incarnation'.

Nor is it simply, as even Dr. Leon Morris seems to imply in his christological study *The Lord from Heaven* (1958), that our Lord went through fear and learning of obedience and strong crying and tears ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ as an exemplary trial run, so to speak, just to show that it could be done. The suffering involved in the incarnation and life and ministry of Jesus, as well as in the obedience of the Cross, was surely suffering at its deepest level, a 'sympathy' which was the real and tragic outcome of an identification with those He came to save as complete, and in the widest sense priestly, in the βάπτισμα of the Cross as in the river Jordan itself.

We must turn in detail, then, to the work of Christ in *Hebrews*, and consider its character and its achievement.

In his study of the teaching of this Epistle in *The Cross of Christ* (1956), Dr. Vincent Taylor discusses the Atonement in *Hebrews* in both its vicarious and representative aspects. He is here summarizing the important and detailed findings he reported in *The Atonement in New Testament Teaching* (1940), where he came to the conclusion that a priestly ministry of Christ which is undertaken on our behalf and as our representative, is as far as the Greek and the theology of the Epistle in these respects will allow us to go.

Now clearly both these notes are axiomatic for the thought and argument of the writer. Jesus tasted death ὑπὲρ παντός (2: 9); He now appears before the face of God ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν (9: 24); and He ever lives to make intercession ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν (7: 25). Similarly, Christ is a merciful and faithful High Priest *secundum ordinem Melchizedek*, εἰς τὸ ἱλάσκεσθαι τὰς ἁμαρτίας τοῦ λαοῦ (2: 17), who is not only given a name which, as Dr. Taylor says, 'itself implies a representative office', but also effects a ministry which is 'for us' to the extent that we can claim

this High Priest as our own: τοιοῦτον ἔχομεν ἀρχιερέα (8: 1; cp. 10: 21).

But have we proceeded along this line as far as we may? Dr. James Denney, for one, does not think so. His argument, in *The Death of Christ*, is rotated around the unavoidable relation he discovers in *Hebrews* between sin and death, the focus of which becomes clear in 9: 14: 'Christ, who through the eternal Spirit (διὰ Πνεῦματος αἰωνίου) offered himself without blemish to God'. The phrase διὰ Πνεῦματος αἰωνίου has been interpreted in a variety of ways. Calvin suggests that the thought is that of the death of Christ becoming saving to us through the power of the Holy Spirit; Bishop Westcott and Père Spicq take it to mean that in the sacrificial act of suffering the divine personality of Jesus (πνεῦμα) was in complete harmony with the Spirit of God (πνεῦμα αἰώνιον); while Denney himself believes that the use of αἰώνιος in association with πνεῦμα means that 'Christ's offering of Himself without spot to God has an absolute or ideal character'.

We shall begin to see the significance of this verse, which is central to the writer's description of Jesus' entry into the Holy Place (9: 12), anticipated by the shadowy σκηνή (9: 3), when we recall the character of God and the nature of sin as these appear in *Hebrews*. God is 'the living God' (3: 12 *et al.*), who reveals Himself in the activities of creation (11: 3), incarnation (1: 2) and judgment (4: 12 and 12: 23). Although the description of God as 'a consuming fire' (12: 29), to whom worship reverence and awe are due (28), is austere as well as majestic, it is important to see that the irruption of sin, which the writer considers with intense seriousness, constitutes both the reason for God's holy reaction in judgment (10: 26ff., though this refers in particular to the condition of apostasy), and the ground for His redemptive activity in Christ. As a result God, who has established the new covenant, anticipated by Jeremiah, finally and fully in Christ, has provided the way for men to 'draw nigh' to Him (7: 29), so that faith becomes well-pleasing to Him (chapter 11), and He can equip men with everything good to do His will (13: 21).

The question, however, remains. The sacrificial offering of Jesus, which replaces once and for all the types of the priesthood

of Melchizedek and the Levitical ritual, provides the basis for a new relationship of fellowship between God and men (described by Paul in terms of καταλλαγή and by this author in terms of entrance to the Holiest), and makes response from man's side not only possible but also imperative. What has made the difference? Vincent Taylor is prepared to see that the act of redemption is accomplished by Christ alone, since man is 'incapable of effecting the removal of sin'. But he is unwilling to admit that language of this kind even grazes the edge of substitution. If, none the less, we can now draw nigh to the Holy Place by a new and living way opened for us in the curtain of Christ's own body (10: 19ff.), where before we were excluded, are we compelled to rule out the possibility that the priestly work of Christ on the Cross of Calvary is the indispensable middle term in this progression? In this sense, at least, the sacrificial action of Christ, by which He achieves something for men that could not otherwise be achieved, and which becomes therefore the ground of man's acceptance by God, may be regarded as substitutionary.

We have thought of the character of the death of Christ in this Epistle as vicarious, representative and, in the allowed sense, substitutionary. We must consider now the sacrificial nature of the Atonement in *Hebrews*. The notion of covenant is of course central to the writer's treatment of the Cross as a sacrifice. Against a background of Old Testament service and ceremonial, tabernacle and *Tishri*, the writer describes for the benefit of his Jewish readers, for whom the significance of this *ethos* would be immediate, the character of the new covenant, replacing the old, of which the Lord Jesus Christ is both the inauguration and the pledge. Superior to Moses in the sphere of history, and to Aaron in the sphere of salvation, Jesus by virtue of His inherent nature – 'He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of His nature' (1: 3) – is able to become not only Priest on our behalf, since He shares our nature, but also Victim in our stead, since His offering is uniquely ἄμωμος (9: 14). And the quality of His priesthood and priestly action is distinctively abiding: 'Thou art a priest for ever, After the order of Melchizedek' (7: 17).

As such, the work of Christ as High Priest takes on a radically

different character from that typical of the Levitical system. Indeed, argues the writer, had it been otherwise, there would have been no need for 'another priest to arise' of the line of Melchizedek rather than of Aaron (7: 11). His work is therefore able to become universally effective in the moral and not simply the ceremonial sphere, dealing with the συνείδησις of the worshipper, and not only with 'food and drink and various ablutions' (9: 10). In line with this, the sacrifice of Christ is able to effect a redemption from transgression (παράβασις) and not merely from error (ἀγνόημα, 9: 15 and 7).

Furthermore, it is of the very essence of the death of Christ, as Père Spicq reminds us in his commentary on 9: 14, that it should be a *voluntary* self-surrender (cp. 9: 25). As true as this remains, we are not allowed to forget that the event of Calvary falls within the total *schema* of God (cp. Acts 2: 23 and Romans 3: 25), so that without any apparent contradiction our author is able to speak also of Christ being once offered (ὁ χριστὸς ἅπαξ προσενεχθείς, 9: 28). And in this capacity he bore the sin of many, by the offering of His own blood. Scholarly debate has raged around the meaning of the biblical term αἷμα, and the gulf between 'life released' and (Westcott and Dewar) 'life yielded in death' (Dr. Morris and Mr. Stibbs) remains unbridged. For our purposes it is sufficient to notice that the self-sacrifice of Christ went to the effective limit of redemptive suffering; it was a suffering unto death διὰ τοῦ ἰδίου αἵματος (9: 12).

So much for the character and scope of the death of Christ in *Hebrews*. But the writer does not end here. His is a practical as much as a theological task, and for this reason he is anxious that his Hebrew Christian readers should see Jesus not merely as Victim and Priest, but also as Priest and King. It is this High Priest whom we have, who has not only accomplished his sacrificial and priestly work on the Cross, but also been exalted to the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven (8: 1). The exaltation of Jesus, indeed, overshadows His resurrection in this Epistle; but precisely because at the same time it presupposes it, those who believe in Him can be described as already 'partakers of a heavenly calling' (3: 1), and even μέτοχοι τοῦ χριστοῦ (3: 14). It is the fact that Christ, the fore-

runner on our behalf (6: 20), has entered into the very presence of God for us (9: 24), which forms the ground of the worshipper's confidence (10: 22) and of the writer's exhortation. 'Let us', he concludes, 'draw near.' And again, since human death is to be followed by divine judgment, and the death of Christ by His *parousia* in glory and the final judgment (9: 27f.), what other reaction can be ours, the writer seems to say, than that of complete identification with the great Shepherd of the sheep (13: 20), who has made entry into true 'rest' possible? Still with the priestly pattern in mind, therefore, he is able to conclude with a note of challenge which seems to contradict the movement of the previous exhortation, but in fact completes it: 'Therefore let us go forth.' (13: 13).

The author of this Epistle is 'intensely concerned', as Professor C. F. D. Moule says in his book *The Sacrifice of Christ* (1956), 'with the finality of the work of God in Christ.' But there is also a very real sense in which God's work of reconciliation in Christ becomes, on the basis of its once-for-all achievement, a 'standing intercession'. The redemptive efficacy of the Atonement, in other words, remains continually active; and I for one would hesitate to limit the meaning of ἐντυγχάνειν (7: 25) simply to the area suggested by the activity of the Spirit in Romans 8: 26, where the same word occurs. Indeed, as Sanday and Headlam point out in their commentary on that verse in *Romans*, the original sense of the word is of the most inclusive nature, so that with Westcott we may construe the phrase as meaning 'human needs of every kind find interpretation by the Spirit and effective advocacy by Christ'.

And lest any should feel that I am here laying myself open to inroads of all kinds of eucharistic misunderstanding, let me boldly declare with a protestant fervour for which I have equally the support of the Vice-Principal of Oak Hill and the Lady Margaret's Professor in this University, that the nature of the τελείωσις of priesthood and reconciliation in Christ is such as will strictly preclude any kind of repetitive self-offering. What then *is* offered at the hands of our interceding High Priest? It is, surely, in the language of the 1662 prayer of oblation, 'the benefits of his passion.' And it is because the

offering is by nature manward and not Godward (except in so far as the activity of pleading an accomplished offering constitutes an offering), that we as members of the Body of Christ can more easily see the Eucharist as the focus of our acceptance of God's verdict on sin, and of God's acceptance of Christ's work of atonement on our behalf.

We may therefore accept the eschatological perspective of C. K. Barrett which we noticed at the outset, and see that in Christ as Victor and Son 'the eternal redemption has already been wrought, but awaits complete application and fulfilment'. There is a very real sense in which the fact and the meaning of atonement belong together.

From our study of the Atonement in the Epistle to the Hebrews, may I be allowed to draw two practical conclusions? Extensively, we are provided in this Epistle with a theology for the practice of evangelism which is timeless and crucial precisely because of its ultimate expression of the finished and continuing work of Christ. 'Let us draw near . . . let us go forth.' Here we are given *par excellence* a study of the intellectual basis and moral incentive of the Church's mission. By this we may live, and upon this we must act. Secondly and intensively, the presentation in *Hebrews* of the ministry of Christ, seen from a ceaseless number of theological and chronological points of view, remains, in Dr. Vincent Taylor's words, 'a theme for adoring meditation'. In the face of this unchanging and unchangeable priesthood, we have entered upon holy ground and are silenced. *Numen adest.* God in all His righteousness and mercy is present, to whom are outstretched in standing intercession the nail-pieced hands of His exalted and victorious Son. Willingly therefore shall we sing, in the words of that same hymn by Charles Wesley:

> 'See, He lifts His hands above,
> See, He shows His prints of love;
> Hark, His gracious lips bestow
> Blessings on His Church below:
> Alleluia!'

The New Warden

WHEN THIS ISSUE appears, the Rev. and Mrs. Leon Morris will have arrived from Melbourne and taken up residence at Tyndale House. They are no strangers to Cambridge, for they were at the House during the period of Dr. Morris' postgraduate studies for his doctorate thesis. They are assured of a welcome from all connected with the House and in the Tyndale Fellowship.

The range of the new Warden's academic interests may be gauged from a brief review of his career. He graduated (B.Sc.) from the Science Faculty of the University of Sydney in 1934 and in 1937 supplemented this with the Th.L. (1st Class) of the Australian College of Theology. He was ordained in 1938 and served in the N.S.W. parish of Campsie and the S.A. parish of Minnipa. In 1943 he was placed in Class I in London B.D. and took his M.Th. in 1946. After postgraduate studies (1950–52) – when he was a member of Tyndale House – he received his Ph.D. (Cantab.) for work on a thesis, subsequently published in a modified form by the Tyndale Press under the title of *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (1955). In 1945 he joined the Staff of Ridley College, Melbourne, as Vice Principal. Dr. Morris has recently spent a period of study leave (1960–61) teaching in Columbia Theological Seminary, Decatur, Georgia, and in Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia and visiting other Colleges in New England and on the Atlantic and Pacific Coasts of U.S.A.

Appointments

H. A. G. BELBEN. Tutor, Cliff College, Calver, Sheffield.

J. N. BIRDSALL. Lecturer in Theology, University of Birmingham

G. C. B. DAVIES. Professor of Pastoral Theology (in addition to Church History), Trinity College, Dublin.

D. ENGLISH. Assistant Tutor, Wesley College, Headingley, Leeds.

E. M. B. GREEN. Tutor, London College of Divinity.

J. H. HARROP. Lecturer in Classics, University College of Sierre Leone.

D. M. MACKAY. Professor of Communication, University of North Staffordshire.

I. H. MARSHALL. Assistant Tutor, Didsbury College, Bristol.

D. M. PATERSON. Part-time Lecturer, Oak Hill Theological College, London.

D. H. WALLINGTON. Assistant Editor of the Bible Translator, United Bible Societies.

D. J. WISEMAN. Professor of Assyriology, University of London.

Publications

As the information concerning 1960–1 publications by members, which at present is in the Editor's hands, is incomplete, it is intended to postpone to the October issue the usual list. Members are being circularized inviting accurate bibliographical notices. The following is given as an example of the desired references to articles:—

A. F. WALLS:

'Documentary Materials for the Study of Sierra Leone Church History', *Sierra Leone Bulletin of Religion* I 1959 pp. 34–44.

'Richard Baxter and Abraham de la Pryme': *Notes and Queries*, vii, 2.19.60 p. 77.

'In the Presence of the Angels' (Luke xv. 10) *Novum Testamentum* iii, 4. 1959.

In *A Dictionary of Theology*. Ed. Harrison and Bromiley (Baker: Grand Rapids) – Articles on Deification, Essenes, Hermetic Literature, Logia, Logos, Mystery, Peter, and Word.

Tyndale Fellowship Study Groups 1961

The Biblical Theology Study Group is from Monday, July 3 to Thursday, July 6. The subject is *The Concept of the Covenant.*

The Old Testament Study Group is from Thursday, July 6 to Monday July 10. The subject is *The Concept of Kingship in the Old Testament and the Ancient Near East.*

The New Testament Study Group is from Monday, July 10 to Thursday, July 13. The subject is *The Petrine Literature.*

The Hebrew Course will be held from Monday, September 25 to Friday, September 29.

Tyndale House Annual Meeting

Following repeated suggestions made in previous years, it has been decided to alter the Annual Meeting from the Easter to the Michaelmas Term. The shortness of the Easter Term and the pressure of examinations on some members of the House and the activities of other members of the Tyndale Fellowship and Friends of Tyndale House, leave few summer Saturday afternoons free.

It is, therefore, proposed to hold the 1961 Annual Meeting early in the next academic year, on October 14.

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